

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 OMB-01 OPR-02 CU-04 LAB-06 SIL-01 EB-11

COME-00 SY-04 SCCT-02 NIC-01 IO-14 DRC-01 NEAE-00

/158 W

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P 131011Z JUN 74

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 049

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: SECTARIAN AND OTHER UNREST IN PUNJAB

REF: LAHORE 0849

BEGIN SUMMARY: DESPITE CHIEF MINISTER RAMAY'S WARNING THAT PUN-
JAB GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT HESITATE TO TAKE "MOST EXTREME
MEASURES" TO BREAK HARTAL, AND PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO'S RE-
PORTED ADVICE TO PROVINCIAL RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS
THAT HARTAL WOULD NOT BE "HELPFUL," INDICATIONS ARE THAT
GENERAL STRIKE WILL BE CALLED IN PROVINCE JUNE 14. THERE IS
ALSO POSSIBILITY THAT NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT-WORKER UNIONS WILL
BEGIN STRIKE JUNE 17. EVIDENCE THAT GOVERNMENT MEANS
BUSINESS HAS COME WITH APPEARANCE OF ARMY TROOPS IN LAHORE
JUNE 13. WORD IS OUT THAT BHUTTO WILL MAKE STATEMENT ON
SECTARIAN ISSUE IN NEXT DAY OR SO BEFORE LEAVING LAHORE.
OBSERVERS BELIEVE HE WILL COMPROMISE, PERHAPS DELAYING
OVERALL SOLUTION FOR SOME TIME. BUT AT SAME TIME IF GOVERNMENT
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DOES NOT GET TOUGH WITH ANTI-AHMADIYA ACTIVISTS, PROBLEM MAY

GET WORSE. END SUMMARY.

1. PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER RAMAY APPEARED ON TELEVISION EVENING JUNE 12 AND DEPLORED ACTIONS OF OPPOSITION POLITICIANS WHO WITH ONE BREATH EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS SECTARIAN ISSUE WITH PRIME MINISTER, AND WITH OTHER ISSUED ULTIMATUM THREATENING HARTALS IF THEIR DEMANDS WERE NOT ACCEPTED BY GOVERNMENT. RAMAY SAID HE HAD REQUESTED PRIME MINISTER TO VISIT LAHORE TO TALK TO RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS, AND CLAIMED THIS WAS FIRST TIME GOVERNMENT HAD NOT TREATED SECTARIAN ISSUE AS LAW AND ORDER PROBLEM. HE APPEALED TO RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS TO HELP GOVERNMENT CALM SITUATION, AND WARNED AGITATORS AND OPPORTUNISTS THAT PROVINCIAL GOV'T WOULD MEET LAWLESSNESS AND DISORDER WITH "MOST EXTREME MEASURES."

2. ACCORDING TO LAHORE PRESS JUNE 13, PRIME MINISTER MET WITH SERIES OF RELIGIOUS AND OPPOSITION POLITICAL LEADERS JUNE 12, AND ARGUED THAT CALLS FOR HARTALS AND CONTINUATION OF ANTI-AHMADIYA PROTESTS WERE NOT HELPFUL IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. ONE PAPER REPORTED THAT BHUTTO SUGGESTED REFERRING SECTARIAN ISSUE TO COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY. (COUNCIL IS CHAIRED BY SUPREME COURT JUSTICE RAHMAN AND MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES NUMBER OF ULEMA, BUT NO AHMADIYAS.) PAPER SAID RELIGIOUS LEADERS OPPOSED SUGGESTION ON GROUNDS THAT ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS WERE APPOINTED BY GOVERNMENT. ALL LAHORE PAPERS SPECULATED THAT BHUTTO WOULD ADDRESS NATION ON SECTARIAN ISSUE IN NEXT DAY OR SO FROM LAHORE.

3. CALLS FOR HARTALS HAVE NOT DIMINISHED IN LAHORE, AND JAC MET LATE INTO NIGHT JUNE 79 TO DISCUSS URYGE, APPARENTLY INCONCLUSIVELY. MEANWHILE, PUNJAB AUDIT DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES REMAIN ON STRIKE AND RAILWAY WORKERS UNION, ROAD TRANSPORT

UNION, AND OTHER SUBORDINATE GOVERNMENT WORKERS UNIONS HAVE INDICATED THEY STILL PLAN TO GO ON INDEFINITE STRIKE BEGINNING JUNE 17.

4. EVIDENCE OF SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH RAMAY VIEWS SITUATION CAME WHEN ARMY TROOPS APPEARED IN LAHORE JUNE 13.
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5. SEVERAL POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN LAHORE HAVE SPECULATED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD COMPROMISE WITH OPPOSITION ON SECTARIAN ISSUE, PERHAPS TO EXTENT OF DECLARING RABWAH OPEN CITY SO THAT NON-AHMADIYAS COULD MOVE THERE. HOWEVER THEY WARNED THAT GIVING IN COMPLETELY TO OPPOSITION WOULD OPEN DOOR TO FURTHER ATTACKS AND PROBABLY WEAKEN PPP GOVERNMENT IN PROVINCE. THEY BELIEVE BHUTTO IS ALSO THINKING ALONG THESE LINES, THAT

HE WILL TAKE TOUGH LINE ON HARTAL, WAFFLE ON DEMANDS TO MAKE AHMADIYAS MINORITY, AND ATTEMPT TO PROVE THAT CIVIL AND MILITARY SERVICES HAVE FEW AHMADIYAS AT TOP LEVELS.

6. COMMENT: FROM LAHORE VANTAGE POINT, IT WOULD SEEM FOOLISH FOR GOVERNMENT TO BOW TO WEAK OPPOSITION WHICH HAS ONLY BEEN ABLE TO POSE THREAT TO RAMAY GOVERNMENT BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SECTARIAN ISSUE ABOUT WHICH MOST NON-AHMADIYAS FEEL STRONGLY. OPPOSITION IS PATENTLY ATTEMPTING TO PUSH PROPOSALS GOVERNMENT WOULD REJECT WITH SOME TREPIDATION IF IT IS CONCERNED ABOUT ITS POPULARITY. AS IN 1953, AHMADIYA ISSUE IS EMOTIONAL. HOWEVER, MANY THOUGHTFUL PUNJABIS READILY CONCEDE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE STRONG STANCE TO PROTECT AHMADIYAS, ABHORRENT AS MOST FIND SECT'S BELIEFS. RAMAY, APPARENTLY WITH FULL SUPPORT OF PRIME MINISTER, HAS NOT PANICKED, AND SEEMS TO BE DETERMINED TO HOLD PROVINCE ON EVEN KEEL. HOWEVER, IF HE SLIPS IN NEXT 48 HOURS MORE DIFFICULTIES WILL SURELY FOLLOW. HE IS NOT ONLY TRYING TO PROTECT LIVES OF AHMADIYAS AND OTHER PUNJABIS -- HE IS ALSO FIGHTING FOR POLITICAL LIFE OF HIS GOVERNMENT.
GRIFFIN

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